

Due to the large number of alumnae visiting the PEC website, the Maier Foundation agreed to the posting of this letter stating their position on the sale of artwork from the Maier Museum of Art. The Maier Foundation is not in any way affiliated with Preserve Educational Choice (PEC) and has no position on the goals of the group or its members.

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Dear President Worden, Trustees and Strategic Plan Implementation Committee:

We are saddened to hear of the momentous decision to change Randolph-Macon Woman's College to a co-educational institution. Such a transformation challenges the alumnae and students to reflect on the history and values of the College. We trust that the strong academic traditions of the past will be enriched by the future changes being made.

As most of you are probably aware, the Maier Foundation has been a principal benefactor of Randolph-Macon for many years. Among other gifts we have funded endowments for need-based scholarships, the first fully-endowed faculty chair, a visiting scholars endowment, plus other additional scholarships together with the art museum endowment. You were kind to recognize our family by naming the museum in honor of our father, and the Maier Museum of Art is the primary subject of this letter.

The historical tradition of collecting quality American art has been the cornerstone of the Maier Museum. Art professors with great vision grew the collection through purchases from the annual exhibitions of contemporary art at the College. Astute purchases were made, and the museum now houses one of the finest college collections in the country.

The Maier Foundation's decision to endow the museum in 1982 recognized that Randolph-Macon housed a gem of excellence. The College had clearly committed to further art education and aesthetics for the students by thoughtfully assembling the collection. The Foundation's donation to maintain the quality of the buildings and the environment of the paintings, however, was not *raison d'être* for the continued excellence of the Museum. The funds were mandatory to maintain the artwork, but the Museum's excellence was the collection, not the physical institution in which it is housed.

The founder of the Maier Foundation, William J. Maier, Jr., strove for distinction in all his affairs from boyhood to the business world. It is not a mistake that at the dedication ceremonies of the renaming of the Maier, both John Landis, board President, and Sally Maier Rowe chose the same story of Mr. Maier from his autobiography. The story related how, after receiving a grade of "B" in freshman English, the next year he enrolled in the most difficult English class under the same professor and received a rarely-achieved "A". This attitude influenced President Lowell to award him the Rhodes Scholarship after his junior year at Harvard. Because of Mr. Maier's standards of excellence for himself and for others, it was fitting to honor him by having his name joined with the already existent art collection at Randolph-Macon.

The members of the Maier Foundation request that no major works in the Maier Museum of Art be sold for any reason. They are an educational resource for the College, and it was with this intention that funds from the Foundation were given to maintain and strengthen this mission. We would be very disappointed if any such sale occurred. We understand how all museums eventually decide to de-access some works, but it is done only through a thoroughly thought-out process during which committees look into the strengths and weaknesses of a collection. It is done to enrich a collection, not to degrade one.

If major works from the Museum are sold, the educational advantages gained by the distinguished collection will be diminished. Top faculty will be difficult to recruit for the art department and academic quality will suffer. Distinguished visiting artists and lecturers will not be drawn to the College. The top caliber of the collection draws grant money for the museum and college programs. These funds will dwindle. The stature of the Maier will diminish if major works are sold. Future donors of art will not give their personal works or money to a lesser institution.

From the time the College was founded, all professors and administrators realized that art was essential to a liberal arts education. The paintings have inspired thousands of alumnae to enjoy and appreciate great works first hand. All students can testify that no replication of paintings or sculptures can replace the appreciation and understanding one receives from the original. The Foundation members believe the collection should be considered only an educational resource for the College. It is our desire that the current collection be utilized for education while maintaining the security necessary for these treasures. We are hopeful that a discussion of the usefulness of the collection in the academic environment of the College will spurn new ideas and visions for its use.

The gem of excellence, the Maier collection, should not be shriveled to a small substitute through sale of any major works. Please maintain the high quality of academics and integrity for which our founder, William J. Maier, Jr., and for which Randolph-Macon Woman's College have stood.

Sincerely,

Ed H. Maier
President

Sara Maier Rowe
Treasurer
Trustee Emerita '67 RMWC